



The Croydon Chronicle

Spring/Summer 2014

Letter from the Supervisor

A hike through the woods last week confirmed that spring is upon us. Families were exploring our trails, spring peepers were singing and I caught a glimpse of some early spring ephemerals like *Claytonia virginica* trying to bloom. After an unusually long and harsh winter it seems like everything and everyone is ready to be outside and connect with the natural world.

Facilitating a connection with nature is one of our goals here at CCNC. Through our programs and exhibits we hope to help visitors experience the benefits of spending time outdoors. A great way to do this is to create nesting boxes to help make outdoor areas more attractive to native species. Not only will you provide habitat but you will also create opportunities for you to observe native species in your backyard. If you stop by the Nature Center we have an exhibit and plans that demonstrate how to build and install a bat box, orchard mason bee nest or a bluebird box in your

yard. These are great ways to support some of our favorite flying creatures while promoting habitat conservation and species survival.

Current research shows us that children who spend time outside experience reduced stress levels, score better on standardized tests, and are more physically fit than those who don't get outside regularly. Summer camps are a wonderful way to ensure that your children enjoy the outdoors and reap these benefits. We are offering some new specialty camps this year including **Wilderness Skills** and **American Indian Crafts and Culture** that are designed to immerse participants in nature by experiencing native culture and learning some valuable survival skills.

All of our programs are designed to get people outdoors whether it's through our **Spring Festival and Native Plant**

Sale on April 26, 2014 from 10am-2pm or our collaboration with the National Parks Trust for **Kids to Parks Day** on May 17, 2014 or our summer Polliwog Adventures for ages 2-5 years. Please look inside the newsletter for a complete listing of our spring and summer programs. And, if you have any suggestions of programs you'd like to see us offer, let us know. We always strive to meet the needs of our visitors.

We enjoy all of our visitors to Croydon Creek. Please be sure to stop by throughout the spring and summer for a program, visit or hike. We look forward to seeing you!

Best regards,

Elissa Totin
Nature Center Supervisor

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Rd, Rockville, MD, 20851

Phone

240-314-8770

Web address

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek

E-mail

ccnc@rockvillemd.gov

Hours of Operation

Tuesday through Saturday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Closed Mondays

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Kids Corner

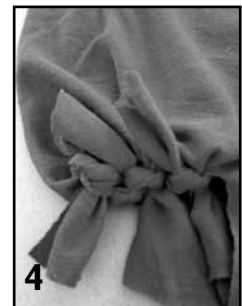
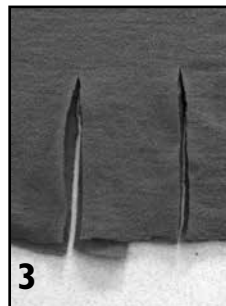
Kids Craft - T-shirt Grocery Bag

You will need:

- Old t-shirt
- Scissors

Directions:

1. Cut off the sleeves and bottom hem of the t-shirt.
2. Cut a scoop into the neckline of the t-shirt. The depth of the scoop depends on how long you want your bag's handles to be. It should go no deeper than the armpits though.
3. Cut a fringe along the bottom of the t-shirt, about ½-1 inch wide and 2-3 inches long (it does not have to be precise). Make sure each cut goes through both sides of the t-shirt, so the fringes are paired evenly. Cut up the side seam of each edge to create the last set of fringe.
4. Tie together each pair of fringes in a double knot.
5. Take your new bag to the grocery store or farmer's market!



Animal Update



Cricket

Eastern Screech Owl

Croydon Creek welcomed a new member to our animal family in February. Cricket, an eastern screech owl, came to us from the Virginia Raptor Conservancy (VRC) in Falls Church. The VRC nursed Cricket back to health after his wing was injured by an automobile. Although Cricket is a healthy owl, his wing healed in a way that he is not able to fly well enough to hunt on his own in the wild, so he will permanently reside at the Nature Center. An eastern screech owl's coloration can be either gray or red. Cricket is the red phase. His coloring helps him to camouflage with tree bark in his natural habitat. In the wild screech owls like to eat things like small rodents, birds and insects. Cricket got his name because of the sound that he makes. The next time you are in the Nature Center stop by and say hello to Cricket. He just might talk back!

Planting Native

By Margot Buchbinder, Naturalist

Take a walk on the Nature Center's grounds this summer, and you might notice the buzz of insects coming from the meadow or birdsong coming from the forest. Many visitors come here to enjoy the woods and try to see some wild animals up close – a sight that we may consider a rarity in this region. However, many of these animals need not be strangers; one of the best ways to attract native wildlife to your own home is to plant native trees, shrubs, flowers and grasses.

Native plants are better at attracting wildlife than non-natives because the local wildlife is more adapted to native plants than to non-natives. This means that native bees and other insects have an easier time pollinating native plants, and that birds know which natives have the best seeds. A native garden may also attract an abundance of insects, and not all insects are nuisances; praying mantises and ladybugs can help keep aphids and other pests in check without the use of pesticides. Planting milkweed and butterfly weed can attract monarchs and other species of butterflies which may come to lay their eggs and feed on nectar. Birds may also be attracted to feast on caterpillars, grasshoppers and other insects. Box turtles can be lured to gardens which have a mix of open space and cover where they can find the insects, worms, plants and berries that make up their diet.

Although much wildlife is welcome into our backyards, most gardeners wish to deter more destructive visitors, including deer. It is possible to discourage deer from damaging a garden by planting deer-resistant natives. Although no plants are completely immune to browsing by deer, deer-resistant plants are unpalatable, and therefore will be least affected by deer. Natives such as spicebush, black-eyed

susan and columbine are good additions to a deer-resistant garden.

Native plants may require less care and maintenance than non-natives, as they are adapted to local weather and soil conditions. When choosing plants for your garden, consider the weather conditions and what previous care and maintenance the garden has required. In this region, heat- and drought-tolerant plants can reduce or even eliminate summer watering. Plants such as purple coneflower and little bluestem make great additions to a drought-resistant native garden.

Rain gardens are another great way to incorporate natives into a property. Rain gardens can be placed anywhere where water is directed during storms – this can include near the entrance to a driveway where water pools after heavy rainfall, or at the exit of a gutter drain. Rain gardens take up excess water during storms, thus preventing runoff from entering local streams too quickly. Rain gardens also filter water before it seeps to streams, reducing the amount of pollutants which make it into freshwater systems from impervious surfaces such as roads. A rain garden will generally include native plants adapted to the edges of wetlands such as ferns, bulrushes and other sedges, swamp milkweed and Joe-Pye weed.

When planting a garden, it is especially important to avoid planting invasive species. Invasives are usually non-native plants which become pest and nuisance species when released into nature; however, not all non-natives are invasive. Even if a plant is kept within a garden, its seeds may disperse into the environment and can devastate local ecosystems. Invasives such as English ivy, a common ornamental vine, can crowd out other plants and compete for sunlight in the wild. Native plants such

as wild ginger and moss phlox can make good groundcover alternatives, while Virginia creeper is a good vine replacement. Bush honeysuckles are common garden plants which can create dense thickets and crowd out other plants in native ecosystems. These non-native honeysuckles can be replaced with native vine honeysuckles including coral honeysuckle. Purple loosestrife is an ornamental invasive to wetland areas which crowds out native cattails; purple loosestrife can be replaced in a garden with native lilies and irises.

Planting native is an important way to support both native plants and wildlife in your area. When planting a wildlife-friendly garden, it is also important to provide sources of food, shelter and water which make a habitat complete. A birdbath can make an excellent source of water for wildlife, and a bird feeder can supplement naturally occurring seeds and berries. A well-planted garden provides cover for a variety of animals, but consider adding built shelters for birds, bats and bees to attract permanent residents to your home. However you set up your garden, planting native is a great strategy to be able to observe the incredible diversity that calls Maryland its home.



12TH ANNUAL

Spring Festival and Native Plant Sale

at Croydon Creek Nature Center

Saturday, April 26

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Enjoy the wonders of nature with your family.

- Woodland Hikes
- Spring Native Plant Sale
- Nature Games and Crafts
- Live Raptor Show with Raptors Up Close
- Sustainability Exhibits
- Bring a picnic lunch

FREE EVENT

No registration required

Croydon Creek Nature Center

852 Avery Road

Rockville, MD 20851

240-314-8770

www.rockvillemd.gov/croydoncreek

The Croydon Chronicle

Spring 2014 Classes

Croydon Creek Campfire (Adult/Child)

Gather around the campfire with your friends for stories, snacks and more. An adult must accompany children and all participants must register. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs for seating.

All Ages

Animal Babies

In nature, spring is the time for babies. Celebrate Mother's Day and learn about some local animal moms and their babies as you gather around the campfire and enjoy a delicious treat.

47145 Sa 5/10 8-9 PM \$5/\$6

Family Geocache

Connect your family with nature with a forest and field geocaching program. Participants will learn the basics of geocaching while spending time outdoors. All participants must register including adults.

Age: 6+

47165 Su 5/11 3-4:30 PM \$6/\$8

Family Ramble

Join a Naturalist on a hike through the Hayes Forest Preserve. Trails are not stroller friendly. All participants must register including adults. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

Age: 1+

Forest

Get to know the forest by looking under logs, searching for forest critters and taking a close-up look at trees.

47166 Su 5/18 1:30-2:30 PM \$3/\$5

Creek

Wade into the creek to catch and examine creek critters. We provide the nets and all equipment; you come prepared to get wet and have fun. Everyone must wear closed-toe shoes!

47167 Su 6/8 1:30-2:30 PM \$3/\$5

Trash to Treasure Crafts

Everyone knows the 3Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle. Fashion your recyclables into fantastic crafts that turn trash into treasures. We'll show you how. Bring at least three of the following: newspapers and glass jar, magazines, cardboard tubes, soda cans, steel can, paper grocery bag, old CD, t-shirt, milk/soda/juice bottles or cartons.

Age: 7+

47169 Su 4/27 1:30-2:30 PM \$7/\$9

Nature Tots (Adult/Child)

Spend time with your child discovering the wonders of nature. A Naturalist will help you explore a new nature topic through nature play, crafts, stories and hikes. Dress for the weather. This program is intended to provide special one-on-one time for you and your child. Adult participation required.

Age: 2-5

Backyard Buddies

46998 Th 4/24 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

A Bug's Life

46999 Th 5/8 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Soil Sleuth

47000 Th 5/22 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Creek Critters

47001 Th 6/5 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Nocturnal Animals

47002 Th 6/19 10-11:30 AM \$8/\$10

Saturday Story and Hike (Adult/Child)

Stop by the Nature Center for story time and a hike. Our Naturalist will read a story and lead a hike based on the story. Dress for the weather. Adult participation required.

Age: 2-5

47155 Sa 4/19 10-11 AM \$4/\$6

47156 Sa 5/17 10-11 AM \$4/\$6

47157 Sa 6/21 10-11 AM \$4/\$6



Visit <http://www.rockvillemd.gov/recreation/guide/> to register

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City of
Rockville
Get Into It

Hours of Operation

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Sunday, 1-5 p.m.

Closed Mondays

Summer 2014 Classes

2014 Summer Camps

Celebrate Honeybees (Adult/Child)

Learn about the amazing and gentle honeybee with our volunteer beekeeper. Explore beekeeping, honeybee biology, and extract honey from the comb. All participants must register and children under age 10 must be accompanied by a registered adult.

Age: 5+
47933 Su 7/27 1:30-3 PM \$5/\$6

Polliwog Adventures (Adult/Child)

Each week explore a new topic in natural history. Through stories, short hikes, games and activities, little ones will learn about nature in a hands-on environment. Adult participation required. Spaces are limited.

Age: 2-5
Wiggling Worms

47844 Th 7/3 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

Frogs and Toads

47852 Th 7/10 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

Beautiful Bugs

47846 Th 7/17 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

47847 Sa 7/26 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

Terrific Trees

47848 Th 7/31 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

Field and Stream

47849 Th 8/7 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

Slithering Snakes

47850 Th 8/21 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

47851 Th 8/28 10-11 AM \$7/\$8

Saturday Story and Hike (Adult/Child)

Stop by the Nature Center for story time and a hike. Our Naturalist will read a story and lead a hike based on the story. Dress for the weather. Adult participation required.

Age: 2-5
47841 Sa 7/19 10-11 AM \$4/\$6
47842 Sa 8/16 10-11 AM \$4/\$6

Sunday Science Sampler

Enjoy an afternoon of learning with your child as you work your way through several self-guided stations designed to teach about nature in hands-on and unique ways. This program is presented open-house style so that everyone can work at their own pace. Plan to spend at least an hour.

Age: 2-6
47549 Su 8/3 1:30-3:30 PM \$4/\$6



Guppy Nature Camp

What's creeping, crawling and flapping your way? Guppy Nature Camp! Meet the critters that call Croydon Creek home and explore exciting natural history topics. Hands-on activities, experiments, hikes and crafts are all in a day's fun. Age: 5-7

9 AM-3 PM
45971 6/23-6/27 \$203/\$240
45973 7/21-7/25 \$203/\$240
45974 8/11-8/15 \$203/\$240

9:30 AM-12 PM
45972 7/7-7/11 \$99/\$119
45975 8/18-8/22 \$99/\$119

Outdoor Expeditions

Get outdoors and discover local natural wonders with staff from Croydon Creek. Experience daily field trips where participants will explore the best nature spots in the area. All trips will be outside so dress for the weather and bring a lunch. Detailed information will be emailed three weeks prior to the start of camp. Age: 9-12

9 AM-3 PM
45979 6/16-6/20 \$265/\$310

Nature Explorations

Whether on land or in water, enjoy discovering nature. Topics may include geology, stream ecology, zoology and botany. Explore a variety of habitats through hands-on and minds-on activities, field studies and other experiments. Camp may include an off-site field trip. Age: 7-10

9 AM-3 PM
45969 6/23-6/27 \$215/\$245
45970 7/21-7/25 \$215/\$245

Nature Service Learning Camp

Have fun at Croydon Creek while earning Student Service Learning (SSL) hours. Participants will investigate local environmental issues each morning. In the afternoon they will complete an eco-friendly volunteer project. Each person will receive 10 SSL hours total. Age: 10-14

9 AM-3 PM
Soil Conservation
45977 7/14-7/16 \$120/\$140

Water Conservation
45978 8/4-8/6 \$120/\$140

American Indian Crafts and Culture

The culture of American Indians will come alive in this camp. Learn about various North American tribes from the Piscataway of the Mid-Atlantic to the Navajo of the Southwest. Discover how to preserve and conserve our natural resources through projects, games, crafts and activities inspired by American Indian traditions. This camp may include an off-site field trip. Age: 8-12

9 AM-3 PM
45980 7/28-8/1 \$219/\$249

Wilderness Skills

Are you a fan of Bear Grylls or Survivorman? Are you amazed by their abilities to survive in the wilderness with just the bare necessities? Participants won't be eating any grubs or road kill but they will learn basic outdoor skills, from campfire cooking to primitive shelter construction, as well as plant and wildlife identification. Camp may include an off-site field trip. Age: 9-12

9 AM-3 PM
45976 8/11-15 \$225/\$250